



# DEAN'S Quarterly

An update on faculty honors & hires in the VCU School of Medicine

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*Please submit news of faculty hires  
and faculty honors through  
your chairman's office.*

## Faculty Honors

Raising our school's profile in the region, the nation and the world

### Anesthesiology

**Michael Czekajlo, M.D., Ph.D.**, associate clinical professor, was honored with the Salute to Service Award by the Medical Society of Virginia Foundation at its annual meeting in October 2015. Dr. Czekajlo received the service to the international community award for his long-term service and commitment.

### Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

**Robert Diegelmann, Ph.D.**, professor, was presented with the Simon Brute' Medal, the highest honor conferred upon an alum, by the National Alumni Association of Mount St. Mary's University in October 2015. Recipients are honored for distinction of career, commitment to community or service to fellow man, and recognition brought to Mount St. Mary's University.

### Dean's Office

**The School of Medicine's 17th Annual Faculty Excellence Awards** honoring outstanding clinicians, mentors, educators and researchers for excellence in teaching, humanism, professional development of women faculty, clinical excellence, and contributions to medical education was held in October 2015. This annual awards program highlighted the extraordinary accomplishments of over 80 faculty in the School of Medicine, VCU Health System, and MCV Physicians. For more information about this event, visit [http://news.vcu.edu/article/17th\\_annual\\_VCU\\_School\\_of\\_Medicine\\_Faculty\\_Excellence\\_Awards](http://news.vcu.edu/article/17th_annual_VCU_School_of_Medicine_Faculty_Excellence_Awards)

### Family Medicine and Population Health

**Steven Cohen, Dr.P.H., M.P.H.**, assistant professor, was awarded the Erickson Foundation Research Award in Positive Aging by the American Public Health Association (APHA) at its annual meeting in November 2015. Dr. Cohen's paper, "Geographic Variation in Rural-urban obesity rates in older adults: Evidence from a national survey" with co-authors Lauren Kelley, M.P.H., CHES; Sarah Cook, M.P.H., Julia Foutz, M.P.H., and Trisha Sando, DPT, CWS, recognizes high-caliber research that significantly advances our understanding of physical, social, psychological, financial, and/or civic dimensions of positive aging on either the individual or community level.

**Hayes E. Willis Health Center** was acknowledged by the VCU Virginia Coordinated Care Program in November 2015 for its 10+ participation in the program. **Mark Ryan, M.D.**, assistant professor, is the medical director of the Center.

**Alexander Krist, M.D., M.P.H.**, associate professor, was appointed as chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Methods Committee by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force in November 2015. The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that makes evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services, such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medicines.

**Saba Masho, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.**, associate professor, was honored as Birth Matters Virginia's 2015 Advocate of the Year for her dedication to eliminating health disparities and improving the healthcare of underserved pregnant women. In particular, Dr. Masho was honored for her role as principal investigator with the Strong Start grant in Virginia. She was recognized at the 2015 Advocate of the Year Award Celebration at City Space in Charlottesville, VA, in November 2015.

### Internal Medicine

**Beth Rubinstein, M.D.**, assistant professor, was selected as one of Style Weekly's Top 40 under 40 for 2015 honoring extraordinary young leaders and their contributions to the Richmond community. The class was honored at a networking reception and awards presentation in October 2015. For more information, go to: <http://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/2015-top-40-under-40/Category?oid=2251502>.

**Lawrence Schwartz, M.D.**, professor and division chair of Rheumatology, Allergy, and Immunology, was honored as the 2015 Researcher of the Year by the European Competence Network on Mastocytosis (ECNM) in October 2015. Dr. Schwartz was honored for his expertise in the field of mastocytosis with substantial contribution to the development of mastocytosis research in the past.

### Obstetrics and Gynecology

**David Chelmow, M.D.**, professor and chair, was appointed to the Obstetrics and Gynecology Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Residency Review Committee in September 2015.

### Psychiatry

**Kenneth Kendler, M.D.**, professor, was honored with the Rhoda and Bernard Sarnat International Prize in Mental Health by the Institute of Medicine in recognition of his research on the role of genes and environment in the development of psychiatric and substance use disorders. Dr. Kendler was presented with the Sarnat Prize during the Institute of Medicine's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., October 2015.

## New Faculty

Expanding our expertise and opportunities for collaboration

### Family Medicine and Population Health

**Rebecca Aycock Brown, Ph.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in July 2015. She earned her medical degree from the University of Memphis and completed her residency training at St. Louis VA Medical Center (internship) and her fellowship in health psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University Health System (VCUHS). Dr. Brown's research interests include health promotion and disease prevention, women's health, and integrated care.

**Nicole Laney, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant clinical professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree from the University of Washington and completed her residency training at Swedish Family Medicine, Seattle, WA.

**Shawnita Sealy-Jefferson, Ph.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Sealy-Jefferson's research interests include the social epidemiology of preterm delivery among African-American women, race/ethnic and gender disparities in health, and community-based participatory research.

**Sebastian Tong, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. He earned his medical degree at Boston University and completed his residency training at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and Lawrence General Hospital, Lawrence, MA. His research interests include addiction medicine, maternity care, and behavioral health integration in primary care.

**Jessica Tsukanov, D.O.**, joined the department as assistant clinical professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed her residency training at South Nassau Communities Hospital, Oceanside, NY. Dr. Tsukanov completed her fellowship in hospice and palliative medicine at North Shore-LIJ Manhasset, NY. Her research interests include primary palliative care and safe practices in pain management.

### **Internal Medicine**

**Candice Culpepper, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in July 2015. She earned her medical degree from St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies, and completed her residency training at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY. Dr. Culpepper's research interests include hospital medicine and quality improvement.

**Krishnasree Rao, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree from Drexel University College of Medicine and completed her residency training at University of Texas (UT) Southwestern Medical Center. Dr. Rao also completed her fellowship in advanced heart failure ventricular assist device and transplant cardiology at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

**Sangeeta Sastry, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree from Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Bangalore, India. Dr. Sastry completed her residency training at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital, Greensboro, NC, and fellowship in infectious diseases at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

**Jeffrey Taylor, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in September 2015. He earned his medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina. Dr. Taylor completed his residency training and fellowship in endocrinology and metabolism at VCU Medical Center. His research interests include pituitary hormone dysfunction and pituitary tumors, adrenal gland tumors and dysfunction, and diabetes mellitus in the post-transplant population.

**Stefano Toldo, Ph.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in September 2015. He earned his medical degree from the Institute of Cardiology, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome, Italy, and completed his fellowship in cardiology at VCU Medical Center. Dr. Toldo's research interests include the role of cryopyrin in cardiac remodeling and heart failure and functional study of the oxido-reductive state of protein disulfide isomerase (PDI) in the diabetic mouse with ischemic cardiomyopathy.

### **Pediatrics**

**Justin Brockbank, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. He earned his medical degree at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine (VCU SOM) and completed his residency training at Children's Hospital of Richmond (CHoR). Dr. Brockbank completed his fellowship in pulmonary/sleep at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. His research interests include auto-adjusting CPAP in children with obstructive sleep apnea, early-onset narcolepsy, and treatment of infants with obstructive sleep apnea.

**Tiffany Kimbrough, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in July 2015. She earned her medical degree at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and completed her residency training at Children's Hospital of Richmond (CHoR). Dr. Kimbrough's research interests include family-centered care, fluoride varnish in the outpatient setting, and patient-safety.

**David Marcello, M.D.**, joined the department as associate professor in August 2015. He earned his medical degree at Boston University School of Medicine and completed his residency training at VCU Medical Center. Dr. Marcello's research interests include hospital medicine, medical student education, patient satisfaction, and resident education.

**Elizabeth Wolf, M.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in August 2015. She earned her medical degree at the University of Washington School of Medicine and completed her residency training at Children's Hospital of Colorado. Dr. Wolf's research interests include vaccine preventable diseases and vulnerable populations.

### **Surgery**

**Mazhar Kanak, Ph.D.**, joined the department as assistant professor in November 2015. He earned his medical degree from Baylor University, Waco, TX. Dr. Kanak's research interests include islet isolation, molecular biology, and viral infection studies.

## ***Student Honors***

Raising our school's profile in the region, the nation and the world

**Class of 2016's Brent Monseur** was featured in an AAMC article on "Choosing a Medical Career." Brent's interest in space exploration and reproductive health has led him to a specialty in Aerospace Gynecology. He stated that as a child he decided to be an astronaut when he grew up and as long as he could remember, he has wanted to focus on health disparities and empowering individuals to control their reproductive choices. Read more about Brent and his medical career decisions in the article <https://students-residents.aamc.org/choosing-medical-career/article/brent-monseur/>

**Class of 2017's Yeri Park** was honored with the Salute to Service Award by the Medical Society of Virginia Foundation at its annual meeting in October 2015. Yeri received the service by a medical student award for her impact on medically underserved communities.